



National
Foreign
Assessment
Center

~~Secret~~
NOFORN-NOCONTRACT

Area Briefs

136 Copies

JUL 25, 1978

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Approved for Release

Date

JUN 1 1978

OUTGOING MESSAGE

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CLASSIFICATION

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LATIN AMERICA BRIEF [REDACTED] FOR JULY 25, 1978.

1. CHILE: [REDACTED] THE CHILEAN PRESS IS SPECULATING THAT MANUEL CONTRERAS, THE FORMER HEAD OF THE CHILEAN NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATE, WILL BE AMONG THOSE INDICTED NEXT WEEK IN THE ASSASSINATION OF ONE-TIME AMBASSADOR TO THE US ORLANDO LETELIER. BECAUSE IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT CONTRERAS WOULD NOT HAVE ACTED WITHOUT PRESIDENT PINOCHET'S CONSENT, THE PRESIDENT EXPECTS A ROUGH TIME AHEAD AND HAS BEEN WORKING TO CONSOLIDATE HIS POLITICAL POSITION. AIR FORCE GENERAL LEIGH'S OUSTER YESTERDAY FROM THE RULING JUNTA WAS A MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION. 150

[REDACTED] LEIGH'S OUSTER WAS THE CULMINATION OF HIS LONGSTANDING FEUD WITH PINOCHET OVER THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY. IN THIS INSTANCE, LEIGH'S PERSONAL CRITICISM OF PINOCHET DURING AN INTERVIEW WITH A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT WAS TOO MUCH FOR THE PRESIDENT, WHO WAS SUPPORTED BY THE OTHER JUNTA MEMBERS AND THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. LEIGH'S REMOVAL ELIMINATES PINOCHET'S MOST CRITICAL COLLEAGUE AND STRENGTHENS THE PRESIDENT'S CONTROL OVER THE JUNTA.

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THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MAY BE HELPFUL TO YOU

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

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██████████ PINOCHET APPARENTLY BELIEVES HIS POSITION IS SHAKY. IN RECENT WEEKS, HE HAS BEEN CAMPAIGNING THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY FOR A CONTINUATION OF HIS GOVERNMENT. HE HAS BEEN ARGUING THAT MANY OF CHILE'S DOMESTIC PROBLEMS WOULD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE IF HE WERE REMOVED. PINOCHET ALSO HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN PLAYING UPON FEARS THAT CHILE IS BEING ENCIRCLED BY UNFRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS AND THAT IT IS OFTEN THE VICTIM OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN ITS DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. ██████████

██████████ ONE RESULT OF HIS CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN THE FORMATION OF A PERSONALIST POLITICAL VEHICLE SUPPORTING THE PRESIDENT- THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND OTHER OPPOSITION POLITICIANS HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF THIS. BUT THEY ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO HINDER IT IF PINOCHET JUDGES THAT THE PUBLIC IS IN FAVOR. THE PRESIDENT HAS SUBSTANTIAL POPULAR APPEAL. BUT PERSONAL MOVEMENTS HAVE HAD LESS SUCCESS IN CHILE THAN IN OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES.

DESPITE PINOCHET'S EFFORTS, SOME MILITARY OFFICERS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN CONDUCTING LOU-KEY DISCUSSIONS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF REPLACING HIM. FOR THE FEW WHO HAVE CONSIDERED THE

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PRESIDENT A LIABILITY FOR SOME TIME, THE PROSPECT THAT CONTRERAS

MAY BE INDICTED ARGUES FOR A CLEAN SWEEP OF THE CURRENT LEADER-

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FORTH MAJORITY WHO STILL SUPPORT PINOCHET, HOWEVER.

THE ONLY WAY TO PRESERVE THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MILITARY
REGIME IS TO KEEP HIM IN POWER. ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE LITTLE ELSE
IN COMMON, BOTH GROUPS BELIEVE THAT CONTRERAS AND PINOCHET WILL
BE CONDEMNED ANEW BY THE WORLD MEDIA AND THAT CHILE'S INTERNA-

TIONAL REPUTATION WILL BE EVEN MORE TARNISHED.

WHATEVER HAPPENS DURING THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS, IT IS
CLEAR THAT PINOCHET IS PREPARED TO FIGHT ANY MOVE TO OUST HIM.
HIS INCLINATION IS TO TIGHTEN UP, RELYING ON HIS MILITARY AND
POPULAR SUPPORT AS WELL AS ON HIS BELIEF THAT HE HIMSELF CANNOT
BE INDICTED IN THE LETELIER MURDER. WHETHER HE WILL BE ABLE TO
RIDE OUT THE STORM IS AN OPEN QUESTION.

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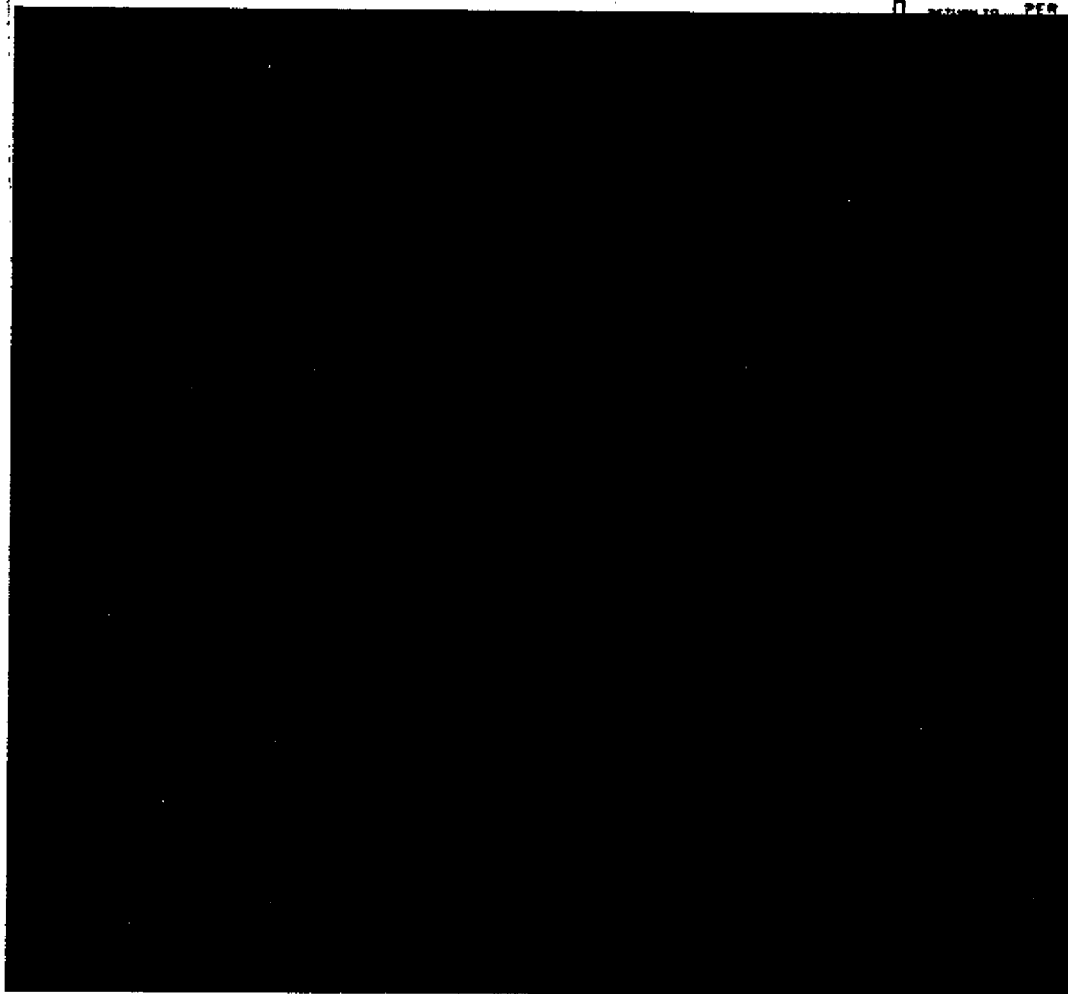
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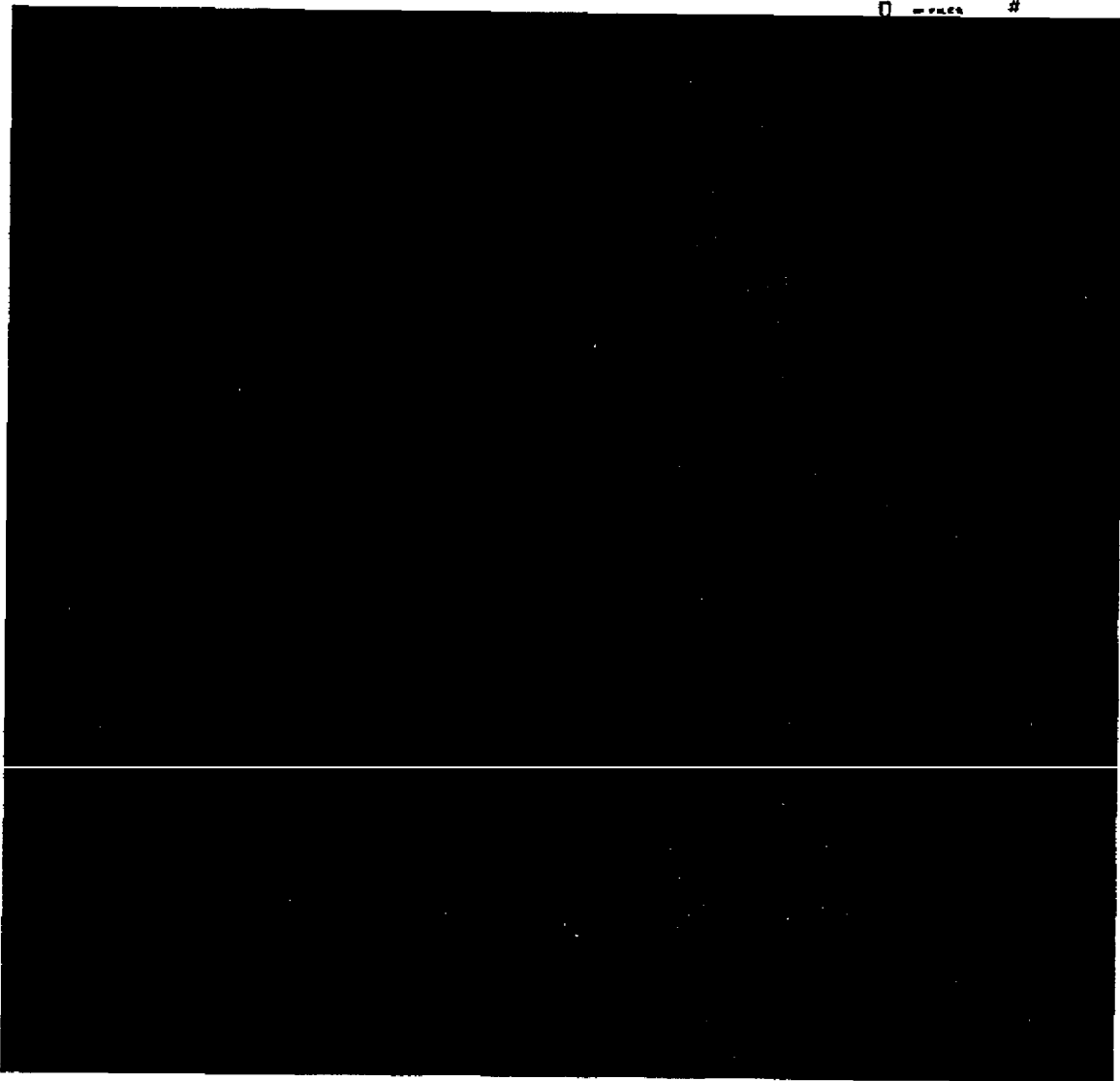
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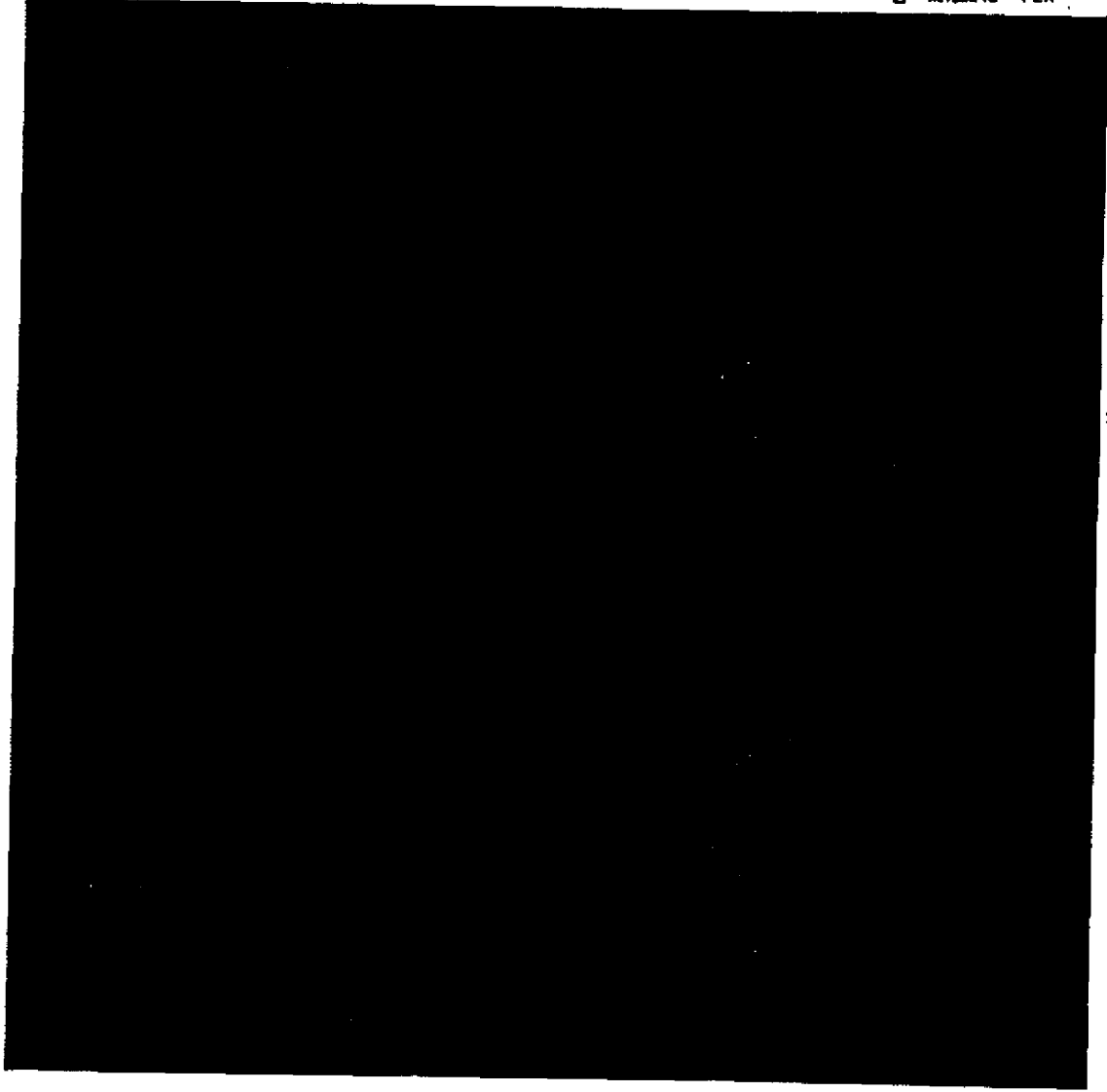
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